

REMARKS

New Claims 21 to 40 are pending in the application, of which Claims 21, 26, 31 and 36 are the independent claims.

Canceled Claims 1 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,308,058 (Mandel) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,421,582 (Wada).

New claim 21 recites an image recording apparatus that comprises an attachment unit, a designation unit, a recording unit, and a determination unit. The attachment unit attaches a detachable memory, to the image recording apparatus, which stores image data and attribute data corresponding to the image data. The designation unit designates an attribute. The recording unit records the image data read from the memory on a recording paper. The determination unit determines a paper output port for the recording paper on which the image data read from the memory is recorded, based on the attribute designated by the designation unit and the attribute data corresponding to the image data read from the memory.

New claim 26 recites an image recording apparatus that comprises a designation unit, a read unit and a determination unit. The designation unit designates an attribute. The read unit reads image data and attribute data corresponding to the image data from a memory. The determination unit determines a paper output port for a recording paper on which the image data read from the memory is recorded, based on the attribute designated by the designation unit and the attribute data corresponding to the image data read from the memory.

One feature of the present invention is the determination unit, which determines a paper output port for the recording paper on which the image data read from the memory is recorded, based on the attribute designated by the designation unit and the attribute data corresponding to the image data read from the memory. When the user designates the date a

photograph was taken, for example, as the attribute, then the recording apparatus sorts a plurality of image data with the date and outputs them to different output ports. As shown in Fig. 1, one image dated "1999.12.31" is discharged to Bin1, while one image dated "2000.01.01" is discharged to Bin2, and three images dated "2000.04.22" are discharged to Bin4.

In contrast, Mandel discloses distributing sheet outputs of various users to bins or "mailboxes" user by user. As the mailboxes are coupled to a publically shared printer, Mandel provides for security features, including locking access doors and user access codes. Furthermore, Wada discloses another style of publically shared print system wherein users use passwords printed on receipts to retrieve printed sheets from storage bins.

However, neither Mandel nor Wada, neither alone nor in combination, disclose or suggest a determination unit which determines a paper output port for a recording paper on which an image data read from a memory is recorded, based on an attribute designated by a designation unit and attribute data corresponding to the image data read from the memory. Therefore, Applicants submit that Claims 21 and 26 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

New Claims 31 and 36 are directed to a method and a program stored on a computer-readable medium, respectively, corresponding to the apparatus of Claim 26. Applicants submit that the discussion above in support of Claim 26 applies equally to Claims 31 and 36. Therefore, Applicants submit that Claims 31 and 36 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

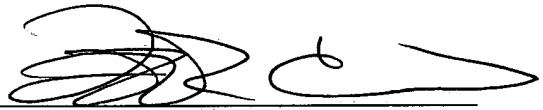
The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. However, individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is

respectfully requested as each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank L. Cire', written over a horizontal line.

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